

# 先導計劃申請成功秘訣

## Secrets of successful applications for Pilot Scheme

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會員提交的申請，最要緊的是項目符合本身需要。

What matters in members' applications is whether the projects meet their needs.

### 先導計劃申請須知

**對**於「旅行社資訊科技發展配對基金先導計劃」（見「主題故事」，二零一六年第二期），以及資訊科技如何、為何可以大力幫助會員的業務（見「主題故事」，二零一六年第三期），會員現在大概已頗為清楚了。先導計劃由政府撥款港幣一千萬元成立，旨在資助僱員少於五十人的中小型旅行社，在業務中採用資訊科技。

先導計劃的資助額為每個項目成本的一半，但以港幣十萬元為上限，而申請者以現金投入的款項不得少於資助額。資助的款項不可用來購置硬件，也不可用來支付日常運作的開支。因此，假如項目成本包括購買電腦的開支、租賃軟件的費用、僱員薪金、行政費、廣告費等等，申請就不合資格。

申請獲批准後，旅行社需要與議會簽訂資助協議，然後按規定開展項目。到項目完成後，旅行社要提交完成報告與經審核賬目，並且達成其他要求，之後就會獲發放資助的款項了。不過，旅行社仍要保留項目的成品兩年，並且遵守一些宣傳活動方面的規定。

### 第一輪申請概況

第一輪申請期由七月八日至九月七日，先導計劃秘書處共收到二十三份申請。由於其後有三份申請撤回，所以評審委員會只在十月二十六日、十一月九日的兩次會議上，考慮了二十份申請。評審準則包括：申請者是否符合申請資格；項目使用的科技是否符合先導計劃的目標，即提升申請者的生產力、服務素質與競爭力；項目的預期成果如何；成本是否合理，項目是否實際可行；以及所需時間是否符

### Notes for Pilot Scheme applicants

Members by now should be quite familiar with the Pilot Information Technology Development Matching Fund Scheme for Travel Agents (Pilot Scheme; see "Cover Story", No. 2/2016), and how and why IT can help them give their business a big push (see "Cover Story", No. 3/2016). Established and funded with HK\$10 million by the Government, the Pilot Scheme is aimed at subsidising SME travel agents, which employ fewer than 50 staff, to adopt IT in their business.

Under the Pilot Scheme, the subsidised amount for each project, capped at HK\$100,000, is half of its cost, and the applicant must contribute an amount no less than the subsidy in cash. **The subsidy cannot be used to purchase hardware or cover daily operational expenses. Therefore, if the cost of a project includes the expenses of buying computers, software subscriptions, employee salaries, administrative costs and advertising fees, then the application is ineligible.**

When the application is approved, the travel agent needs to sign a funding agreement with the TIC, and then begins its project according to the rules. After the project is completed, it should submit a completion report and its audited accounts, and fulfil other requirements, after which the subsidised amount will be reimbursed. Nevertheless, it still needs to keep the project deliverables for two years and observe some rules in promotional activities.

### Overview of first-round applications

A total of 23 applications were submitted to the secretariat of the Pilot Scheme during the first-round application period between 8 July and 7 September. As three applicants later withdrew their applications, the Vetting Committee only considered 20 applications at two of its meetings held on 26 October and 9 November. **The assessment criteria include whether the applicants are eligible; whether the technologies used in the projects can fulfil the objectives of the Pilot Scheme, namely raising the productivity, service quality and competitiveness of the applicants; what the anticipated results of the projects are; whether the costs are reasonable and the projects practical; and whether the time**

合規定。

在第一輪二十份申請中，有十七份獲批准，成功率為百分之八十五。所有申請者已於十一月底獲悉結果，獲批准的申請者全都需要於明年一月與議會簽訂資助協議，當中會訂明資助金額及各項條款與細則。

## 獲准項目式俱備

十七個獲准項目一半以上都只有一個要素而已，但有幾個則有兩至四個要素。大家可能已經猜到，最受歡迎的要素是設立網上預訂及付款系統，九個項目有此要素；其次是建立網站或為現有網站改版，在六個項目中出現；第三受歡迎的要素是開發接受預訂及付款的手機應用程式，有兩個項目以此為目的。至於項目中的其餘要素，由於只切合各申請者獨特的需要，因此難以歸類。以下是一些獲准項目，且看看會不會激發其他會員的思維，為自己的項目想出新主意。

在獲准項目所包含的網上預訂及付款系統上，可以預訂的旅遊產品有機票、酒店以及機票連酒店套票。對於初次踏足網上預訂的旅行社來說，選擇這些產品自然不過，但其實往後可供預訂的產品多不勝數；這裡且舉兩個例子：演唱會的門票與知名餐廳的座位。會員還應知道，潛在顧客搜尋旅遊產品時，可以考慮價錢、時間、等級等不同因素，因此預訂系統如果易於使用，而且有多種選擇，就會吸引不同年齡的人了。在網上付款方面，有些申請者只用一種電子支付方式，有些則用好幾種，這裡沒有人人適用的準則，因為不同支付方式都各有利弊。

有一個項目的要素之一是為公司現有的網站改版，在新網站上為每名顧客開設旅遊網誌，網誌的瀏覽量就像信用卡的積分，可以用來換取公司的旅遊產品。香港人酷愛旅遊，而且熱中在社交媒體上分享或炫耀旅遊時所拍的照片或錄像片段，這個構思的巧妙之處就是利用香港人的這個特點，既可滿足顧客與人分享旅遊樂趣與心得的衝動，又可藉此建立顧客忠誠，還可借助顧客的網誌來吸引網民到公司網站瀏覽，從而推高銷售額，可謂一舉三得。

會員如果以為資訊科技只是對外遊業務有幫助，

needed to complete the projects meets the requirement.

Of the 20 first-round applications, 17 were approved, which represents a success rate of 85%. All the applicants were informed of the results in late November, and each successful applicant is required to sign with the TIC in January next year a funding agreement, which details the subsidised amount and the terms and conditions.

## Approved projects vary greatly

While the majority of the 17 approved projects have one element only, several have two to four elements. The most popular element, as you may predict, is to implement an online booking and payment system, included in nine projects, which is followed by, in six projects, the attempt to launch a new website or revamp an existing one. The third popular element, the aim of two projects, is to develop a mobile app for booking and payment. As for the remaining elements included in these projects, they can hardly be categorised since they only cater for the peculiar needs of the applicants. Let's take a look at some of the approved projects, and see if they can inspire other members to think up some creative ideas for their own projects.

The travel products available for the online booking and payment systems in the approved projects are air tickets, hotel rooms and air-plus-hotel packages. Whereas these products are the natural choice for first-time attempts at taking online bookings, there is in fact a wide range of possibilities in what may be offered next: tickets for concerts and reservations in renowned restaurants, to name just two examples. Members should also realise that **when their potential customers search for travel products, they may consider various factors such as the price, time, grade, etc of the products, and therefore a user-friendly booking system that allows its users to have a range of choices may appeal to people of different ages.** When it comes to online payment, some applicants will use only one type of electronic payment, and some will use several. There is no universally applicable rule here because different types of electronic payment have their pros and cons.

One of the elements in a project is to revamp the existing company website in such a way that the applicant can create a travel blog for each of its customers on the new website, and the page views of the blogs, just like the reward points of credit cards, can be redeemed for its travel products. The beauty of this idea is that it can kill three birds with one stone by taking advantage of the enthusiasm of Hongkongers, eager travellers themselves, for sharing or showing off on social media the photos or videos they have taken while travelling: to satisfy its customers' urge to share with others the joy and insights they have gained on their trips, to build up customer loyalty, and to boost sales through its customers' travel blogs, which can draw Internet surfers to the company website.

If members think that IT can only be helpful for outbound busi-

那就錯了。有一家申請者專門開辦本地深度生態導賞團，這雖然是個冷門市場，但無論本地還是海外都有一些旅客有興趣到香港的郊野尋幽探秘，所以算是有利可圖。不過，開辦這類深度生態團並不輕易，有時旅行團可能因為天氣惡劣等原因而臨時取消，而且合資格帶團的導賞員又不多。申請者因此希望重建現有網站，使新網站不僅可以接受團隊預約和付款，而且行程有變時可以儘快通知顧客。此外，新網站還可以記錄導賞員的工作時間，計算薪金等，從而達到有效管理的目的。

申請者有種種類別，除了從事外遊業務及本地團之外，還有一家專門提供會議包團服務。這類包團由構思到完成行程往往需要六至九個月，其間有很多改動，每次改動都要與顧客聯絡並以書面作實，因此步驟又冗長又繁瑣。申請者希望在內部系統中加入條碼系統，職員登記顧客資料時系統會自動產生條碼，那樣日後職員或顧客就可以利用條碼，在有需要時更改資料，而在會議現場的職員也可用同樣方法輕易辨認出席者。

## 別以為可以一勞永逸

由現今網上旅遊市場的趨勢看來，會員不得不更加著力發展網上業務，這已經相當明顯了。不過，會員應當明白，在資訊科技的世界是沒有一勞永逸這回事的。即使今年在資訊科技投放了一大筆款項，但以後每年仍須不斷耗資更新科技，務求保持領先對手的優勢。所以如此，是因為資訊科技只能為會員帶來相對優勢，而不是絕對優勢。

甚麼是相對優勢，還是用例子來解釋吧。假設有一百家旅行社，當中十家有網上預訂系統，那麼相對於其餘九十家旅行社來說，那十家旅行社就有網上預訂系統的相對優勢。可是，一旦那九十家旅行社全都有了網上預訂系統，原先十家旅行社的這項相對優勢就會消失了。任何旅行社想再要勝人一籌的話，就要尋找別的相對優勢了。在旅遊業也罷，在資訊科技的世界也罷，絕對優勢都難以出現，所以會員必須趁現在還擁有相對優勢的時候，尋找屬於自己的新相對優勢。📌

ness, then they are wrong. One of the applicants specialises in in-depth guided eco-tours in Hong Kong, which, despite being a niche market, is profitable because some local and overseas travellers are interested in the unexplored side of Hong Kong's countryside. In-depth eco-tours of this kind, however, are not easy to organise because, for one thing, the tours may have to be suddenly cancelled on occasion because of some unexpected reasons such as bad weather, and for another, there are not many guides who are qualified for leading these tours. This applicant, therefore, wishes to relaunch its existing website so that the new website can accept tour bookings and payment, and also quickly notify the customers of any changes to their bookings. The new website will also allow the applicant to efficiently manage its eco-guides by recording their working hours and calculating their earnings.

The applicants come in many kinds: apart from those engaged in outbound business and local tours, one applicant is a specialist in organising charter tours for conventions. Many changes will occur from the conception of a tour to its completion, which usually takes six to nine months, and the steps involved in each change are long and tedious because communication with the customers and confirmation in writing are required in each step. The applicant wants to incorporate a barcode system into its internal system so that if any changes need to be made in the future, its staff or customers can make use of the barcodes automatically generated by the new system when customer information is entered into it, and these barcodes can also be used at the venue of the convention to allow its staff to easily identify the attendees.

## No such thing as one-off efforts

Judging from today's trends of the online travel market, it is very clear that members have little choice but to invest more efforts in developing their online business. Having said that, they should realise that in the world of IT, there is no such thing as one-off efforts. Even if they spend a large sum of money on IT this year, they still need to keep investing in IT upgrades in the coming years in order to hold the lead over their rivals. That is because **IT can only create for members relative advantages, but not absolute advantages.**

Let's use an example to explain what a relative advantage is. Suppose there are 100 travel agents, among which 10 have online booking systems. These 10 agents, therefore, have a relative advantage over the other 90 agents in the form of their online booking systems. However, once all these 90 agents have acquired online booking systems, this particular relative advantage enjoyed by the 10 agents will disappear. Any agents wishing to be ahead of others will then need to look for some other relative advantages. **As absolute advantages are rare to come by whether in the travel industry or in the world of IT, members need to look for their own new relative advantages while they still get hold of existing ones.** 📌